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The World's Need.

BY

JOHN N. FORMAN.

THE WORLD'S NEED.

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My dear Friends and Fellow Volunteers: —

It is with great joy that I take this opportunity of writing a few words to those of the volunteers who have completed, or are near the completion of, their preparatory studies. In very many hearts there must be a great longing to know God's will at this particular point. Let us wait on him for guidance. "Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path." "The Lord shall guide thee continually." Let it be the resolve of each heart, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak."

With some the issue is, "Shall I go or stay?" This question would probably not be asked if you could *see* the needs abroad. It is hard, without seeing, to realize these; and the needs at home are so very real.

Here, then, we must simply walk by faith, not by sight. You *know* that multitudes are living and dying without hope; then just *act on this knowledge.*

As I write to you from one of the mission fields of India, surrounded by multitudes whom we can barely touch, how small look the fields in America? During the past winter I have stood to witness for Christ in scores of towns with population from seven thousand to twenty-eight thousand — towns which perhaps receive a brief visit once in one, two, or three years. There is a city of sixty thousand which I had hoped to reach. It is unoccupied by Protestant workers, and hardly ever even visited. It is part of an immense tract containing eight million people; and in all this region there is just one mission station. Glance for a moment at the French possessions of Cambodia, Annam, and Tonquin, with a population estimated at from ten to fifteen million, and no Protestant missionary. As for the multitudes of inland China and central Africa, the need is vast, unspeakable. Oh, for more holy enthusiasm! Let us take no rest, and give God no rest.

It is related of Michael Angelo that one day, when examining the work of his pupils,

making here and there a correction, he came to one picture which was very good except for being crowded and contracted. He wrote over this the one word, "*amplius*," *wider*. Is not Christ to-day writing this word of correction and command over the Church's work? May He not be writing it over your life-plan? If there be difficulties in our way, shall we not call on God, who cut a road-way through the Red Sea?

We need more high loyalty to Christ. Once when Mohammed's army was returning from battle, a woman stepped up to one of the soldiers and asked, "Where is my father?" "He is slain," was the answer. "And my husband?" "Slain also." "And my son?" "Slain with them." "But Mohammed?" "Here he is, alive," replied the soldiers." "O Prophet," said the woman, "since thou livest still, all our misfortunes are as nothing." My friends, we are led on by Jesus Christ. Shall the fanaticism of this poor Mohammedan woman be a stronger motive than our loyalty and love? He counted no sacrifice; He endured the cross; He tasted death *for every man*.

Let us make very sure that, in deciding on our life-work, self does not come in.

"There is a man who often stands
Between me and Thy glory,
His name is self;
My carnal self,
Self-seeking self,
Stands 'twixt me and Thy glory."

In India, owing to the long period of drought every year, the fields need much irrigation. Two men and two oxen may be seen working nearly all day, drawing from the well the water which runs in little channels to various parts of the field. The machinery is clumsy and the work very slow. But in some regions the government has constructed canals. I have seen one of these canals, two hundred feet wide, carefully graded, with its great, strong, perpetual flow; and this water runs out into hundreds of channels, and irrigates thousands of miles of country. What a contrast between this and the two men and two oxen drawing up water by the bucketful! This canal illustrates a life given up to God, to be the channel of His glorious will, that through us there may flow the rivers of living water. And this means life and healing to the nations.

"O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just *as* Thou wilt, and *when* and *where;*
Until thy blessed face I see,
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share."

But self is so subtle, marring the whole gracious work.

"O send me forth, my Saviour,
O send me for Thy glory,
Regarding not the praise of man,
And trampling on the fear of man,
And fighting for Thy glory, *Thy glory.*"

The question of fitness for the work so often comes up, some thinking themselves unfit, and others regarding themselves as too fit, or, as it has been put, "Surely inferior metal would do for the heathen." There is a call for every kind of consecrated talent, and also need for very great humility of heart in this work. "It is not wit, it is not wisdom, it is not earthly wealth, it is simply the unsearchable riches of Christ dwelling in the hearts of men who are vitally united to Him, that will enable us to save the world."

As to the great need for your services at home there can be no question. But the following sentence, from the secretary of an English missionary society, contains the germ of the answer: The Moslem power sprang from the ashes of an extinguished missionary fire," and it planted itself in former strongholds of Christendom. Just in proportion to the decline of missionary zeal in our home churches will be the decline of

spiritual life. "And wheresoever the carcass is there will the vultures be gathered together," that is, wherever there is a dead church, there will descend the ministers of God's vengeance. The existence of the home church depends on missionary effort, and its having life more abundantly depends on the extent and vigor of this effort.

I know the question with many is simply: "Is now the time? Shall I prolong my studies? Shall I engage temporarily in some form of home work?" As to the latter question, there is very great danger of the work which is undertaken temporarily becoming a permanence. And I doubt whether it will, in the majority of cases, prove any real preparation for foreign work; at least, not nearly enough to compensate for the time taken. As to prolonging one's studies after having completed the ordinary course for ministers, you must remember that there will be two years of preparation *after* reaching the foreign field, in the line of language study. And even then you will perhaps want two or three years more for further study to make you an adept in the language. Here is a point where we want no cutting down of time and effort. To be able to speak the vernacular *like a native*, will be worth vastly

more than a post graduate in philosophy, theology, or medicine. And life is short — very short, when we think of the work to be done. But do not understand the above as favoring your coming out before having completed the ordinary course in theology or medicine.

And now let us, with all the energy God has given, press into the conflict.

> "We mark the foes' advancing ranks,
> We see their gathering powers;
> The battle may be fierce and long,
> The victory *must* be ours."

Once a Mohammedan prince, or Nawaab, went to see the King of Delhi. The King showed him the glories of his capital, and afterwards said to the Nawaab: "Tell me why is it, that at times, during your visit, your face has looked dark and sad and gloomy, and at times it has looked bright and glowing?" The Nawaab replied: "Great King! as I gazed on the wealth of your kingdom, and the glory of your army, my heart sank, and I said, 'What hope for me, if this King should wage war against me? He would utterly destroy me and my people.' But when I turned from these and looked at my *sword*, then my courage rose, and my heart became bold as a lion."

As we look out at the world to-day, the task seems a hopeless one. But how our courage rises when we look at the glorious gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation; as we think of the Almighty Spirit, whose office it is to convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; and as we remember the words, "Lo, I am with you"—and at any moment His invisible presence may be changed for his visible presence: "Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus." "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has set over his household, to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

JOHN N. FORMAN.

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